AN

EPISTLE

To the PEOPLE called

QUAKERS,

Emitted by

Mr. ROBERT RICH,

Who arrived at *LONDON* from the BARBADOES the Ninth day of *September*, 1679, and departed this Life the Sixteenth of *November* following.

LONDON,

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An Epiſtle for the moſt pure Amity and Unity in the Spirit Life and Love of God, in all ſincere-hearted Souls amongſt the People called QUAKERS. *And as to them, ſo unto all, or any other Sort or Sect of People that own and follow the Light of Chriſt Jeſus, wherewith every one is enlightened,* ROBERT RICH *ſendeth Greeting in our Lord God Everlaſting.* Allelujah.

IN the Year 1666, feeling the Babe of Grace (the Word in the Heart) to wax ſtrong in the Love of God ſhed a broad in my Heart, I ſent to the Poor of your People *Thirty pounds*; which after ſome of your Leaders had received, (to wit, *John Bolton*, *Gerard Roberts*, and *Amos Stoddard*) and given under their hands accordingly, 'twas denied to be received; and about a Year after returned to me again, with many evil opprobrious Names; which makes me ſay, That *I went to my Own, but my Own would not receive me, but ſold me into* Ægypt (by their many falſe Reports;) And poor *Joſeph* found no greater Enemies than his Brethren were. Nevertheleſs the Lord my God did not forſake me, but found me out in the Innocency wherewith he had cloathed me, and appeared to me in all my ſtraits, and was my Strength, my Joy, and Crown of Glory; and at length brought me forth of Priſon to ſtand before Princes, aſſiſting and carrying me with much Courage, and through great Oppoſition, to bear and finiſh my Teſtimony to Chriſt in the Saints. And being caſt out from my Brethren, the Lord my God took me up, and became my Teacher under whoſe Teachings I felt more of the Love of God, and increaſed more in knowledg of the Things of God, than when I ſat under the Teachings of Men; by whoſe Teachings I grew in Wiſdom and in Stature, unto the meaſure of a perfect Man in Chriſt Jeſus; then I came to know, that out of *Egypt* God called his Son, to whom he hath given, not only the *Heathen*, but the whole World for his Poſſeſſion and Inheritance. In which Spirit of the Son, I call to mind the ſweet Union and Communion I had with the *Quakers*, when they preached Chriſt the Light in every one that cometh into the World, the way to God the Father of Lights; which Light ſprang up ſo ſtrongly in my Heart, that (with St. *Paul*) it ſtruck me down to the Ground, where I felt the Root of the Matter in my ſelf, ſo that I needed no Man to teach me; but as the Unction, that ſmall grain of Muſtard-Seed grew to a great Tree, on whoſe Body did hang all my Sins, my Weakneſſes and Infirmities; which Seed of the Kingdom begot in me a new Heart, and

Placed within me a right Spirit, the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding, fill'd with the Love of God. *Alleluiah.*

In the day when the People called *Quakers* were ſmall in their own Eyes, I dearly loved them; who did not only preach Chriſt the Truth and Light in every one, but with much boldneſs and courage, and through great Perſecutions, defended the ſame, living in much Love and Amity one with another, (which to me was a moſt lovely ſight to ſee); till there came to be a difference between *J. N.* and *George Fox*; then *G. F.* by reaſon of his Enmity and Self-exaltation, envied and perſecuted *J. N.* and begat a moſt bitter wrathful Spirit in all his Friends againſt *J. N.* and all that ſtood by him in his ſufferings. Thus *G. F.* was the Father that begat all thoſe Diviſions, Rendings, and Tearings that were then amongſt the *Quakers*, (and ſince to this very day); which with great violence laſted till *J. N.* took all the blame on himſelf, and made himſelf of no reputation, who was circumciſed in Heart and Soul; in which Circumciſion he lived and died, a true *Iſraelite* indeed.

But *G. F.* and his Party continued acting in another manner of Spirit; for I have ſeen thoſe pull, hale, and carry out of their Synagogue at the *Bull and Mouth*, one *Richard Freeman*; and the chief in this work was *John Bolton*, with divers others. At this time I perfectly ſaw, that God had divided in *Jacob*, and ſcattered in *Iſrael*; and that a ſeparation was making betwixt the Precious and the Vile amongſt the *Quakers*.

And was it not the ſame bitter perſecuting Spirit in *G. F.* that writ againſt *J. Perrot*'s Book, called *Unity and Amity?* for did not *G. F.* ſay, *This Book was writ with* Cain's *Spirit*? crying againſt his Sottiſhneſs and Ignorance; affirming, That a Cloud had compaſſed him, that he went in the way of the falſe Prophets, that his Spirit would give up the Children of God to Perſecution. Further alleadging, that *J. P.* is one of *Ham's* Stock, and that his groſs Lies proceeded from a deviliſh helliſh Spirit, and that *none that are in the leaſt Truth, will believe him*; and that he is a Liar and Deceiver. And the great Offence *G. F.* takes at this Book, is, that *J. P.* owns the Spirit of God's Grace and Light to be in *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, *Anabaptiſts*, *Seekers*, and others; alſo that he hath Unity and Amity with all that walk therein; the which *G. F.* denying, and calling it *a Lye*, &c. plainly ſhews, he is an Enemy to all that will not bow down to him, and call him Maſter, or Father of their Spirits; and that he is turned from the Faith once delivered to the Saints; and that he is removed to another Goſpel than what at firſt himſelf had preached; and alſo writ againſt *J. P.* that he was like a Dog, ſnarling and biting ſuch as are in the Life of Truth, and ſo like a Dog thinks he will die This and much more hath

G. F.

G. F. writ againſt *J. P.* purſuing and hunting him (as *Saul* did *David*) like a Partridg on the Mountains, from Country to Contry, from Region to Region, and from City to City, whitherſoever he went, theſe venemous, Arrows were ſhot againſt him.

At this time I perfectly ſaw a Star fall from Heaven, called *Wormwood*, or the *Dragon's Tail*, with which he drew to the Ground a third part of the Stars of Heaven; then I ſaw a War in Heaven, (a Religious War) the *Dragon* againſt the *Lamb*; *Michael* and his Angels fought againſt the *Dragon* and his Angels. Which bitter Spirit of the *Dragon*, did write or indite *John Bolton's* Book, printed 1670, intituled, *Judas and his Treachery*, &c. In which Book, he ſaith, *The thirty pounds* Robert Rich *ſent to the Poor amongſt the* Quakers, *was the price of Blood, and* Judas *his Treachery*; *That* Robert Rich *is a Vagabond on the Earth, one that hath not an Habitation in the Living God*; *That he is a Contender againſt God's Bleſſed and Holy Way, the Way of Life, with whom* Robert Bacon *is joined*; *That they were Idolaters, and judged them to be the Whoriſh Spirit, and that the Myſtery of Iniquity, in* R. R. *and* R. B. *was brought forth to open view.* And all along his Book is full of the like Expreſſions, not only againſt *R. R.* and *R. B.* but the ſame Railing Accuſations are alſo againſt Innocent *J. N.* and *J. P.* and for no Evil ſaid or done againſt any one of them, as in their own Conſciences they well know. To all which Railing Accuſations, *R. R.* ſaith, *The Lord rebuke thee.*

About the ſame time another Book was writ againſt *R. R.* and *R. B.* by *Ger. Roberts*, *Geo. Whitehead*, and *E. H.* intituled, *Impudency and Ranteriſm rebuked*; in which they call the Spirit of *R. R.* which ſent Thirty pounds to their Poor, *A drunken ranting Spirit, a fained Love*; and the Gift they call *Cain's Sacrifice*, *Balack's Reward*, and *Balaam's Wages*, *Judas's Oblation*, and a *Superſtitious Idolatrous Gift.* Alſo that *R. R.* is *a wandring Star, a raging Wave of the Sea*; that *he is a Sow wallowing in the Mire, a Dog caſting up his Vomit*; that *he is that Fool, which ſaith in his Heart, there is no God*; *and bray a Fool in a Mortar, and he will never be the wiſer*; *and that this folly hath bin with him ever ſince the days of* J. N. All this, and much more, for nought elſe than for *R. R.* his Gift to the Poor of their People. Which Language let *G. F.* and his Friends well conſider whether it proceeded from the Spirit of the Lamb, that loves Enemies, or from the Dragon, that caſts his Floods after the Man-Child to devour Him. who is the only begotten of God in the Saints; He muſt rule and reign, though *G. F.* and his Men of War never ſo much rave and rage: I ſay, that the only begotten of God, by the overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt in the Saints, the Virgin Daughter of *Sion*, whoſe Name is *Immanuel*, muſt ſurely rule and reign. Even ſo, *Amen. Alleluiah.*

What

What had you againſt *J. N.* more than that God had taken away his Judgment from him, and then led him into the Wilderneſs, to be tried and tempted by *G. F.* and others, and to ſuffer by that Spirit that then ruled in the Children of diſobedience? who in all meekneſs and patience did bear and ſuffer the enmity and cruelty of all his Perſecutors, as a good Example.

And what had you againſt *R. R.* more than that he ſtood by *J. N.* in his Sufferings, and for pulling off his Hat at the Command of the Lord, as a ſign of Love to them that underſtood that ſign better, than if he had ſaluted after your mode and faſhion in giving the Hand? Alſo that he pulled off his Hat, which was to teſtify that the Hat might be made an Idol, both in keeping it on, and in pulling it off?

And what had you againſt *J. P.* more than for owning the Light of Chriſt in *Preſbyterians*, *Independents*, *Baptiſts*, *Seekers*, and others, even in all that believed in it, and followed it? And is not the Light of Chriſt in every one, the Enſign, to gather together all of every Sect and Nation, thoſe that follow it, into Unity with the Lord, and Amity one with another? And why was *G. F.* ſo bitter againſt *J. P.* for declaring, that no ſuch beggarly Element as the Hat off or on, is any part of God's Worſhip? And if *G. F.* muſt be obeyed in theſe things, rather than the Light of Chriſt in our ſelves; whether then *G. F.* and his preſcribed and impoſed Forms, be not the greateſt Idol that ever was ſet up by a Profeſſing People? let the Witneſs of God in every one be Judg.

I have lately read a Manuſcript, ſubſcribed *George Fox*, writ to all that would know what thoſe People called *Quakers* are, and ſhewing their Experiences which they have ſeen, and gone through, to Prieſts and Profeſſors: Which Paper contains fifty Paragraphs.

In the firſt and ſecond *G. F.* ſaith, *We thought it a hard thing for* Cain *to kill Righteous* Abel; *but when we look'd within our ſelves, we ſaw that envious wrathful Man that ſhew every appearance of God within, and ready to ſlay the Righteous without.* Then *G. F.* goes on, ſpeaks againſt *Adam*'s Fall, and againſt *Joſeph*'s Brethren, for ſelling of him into *Egypt* &c. and tells Prieſts and Profeſſors, *That if they look within, they ſhall find this Nature in themſelves.* And I tell *G. F.* that he need not go ſo far to ſeek this evil Nature in Prieſts and Profeſſors. Let him look but within himſelf, and conſider his own Actings againſt his Innocent Brethren, and he will find *Cain*'s Nature *there*, and *Cain*'s Sin to lie at his *own Door*, and will know him that ſold *Joſeph* into *Egypt*, &c. And this Spirit was the cauſe of *G. F*'s own Fall, who was once an Angel of Light, and had a place in Heaven, but is fallen from thence like Lightning, and is now become an Angel of the

Bottom.

Bottomleſs Pit, where he rules and governs over all that have not their Names written in the Lambs Book of Life, continuing their forms of Godlineſs, their long Preachings and long Prayers from the Comprehenſion of Truth, but not with the Life and Power thereof. Thus ye ſuffer that Woman *Jezebel*, which calls her ſelf a Propheteſs, (by good words and fair Speeches) to ſeduce and deceive the Innocent among you, keeping them always learning, but can never come to the Knowledg of the Truth as it is in Jeſus, unleſs they ceaſe from Man's Teachings, and come to the Teachings of God in themſelves, which alone truly teacheth the way to Life and Salvation. *Allelujah.*

I have alſo read a Teſtimony from the Brethren, met at *London* the third Month 1666, ſubſcribed by eleven of your Miniſtery. Alſo from a Meeting at *Briſtol*, the 27*th* day of the 7*th* Month 1669, ſubſcribed by 36 Perſons. Alſo from a Meeting at *Ellis Hooks*, the 12*th* of the 4*th* Month 1677, againſt *John Wilkinſon* and *John Story*, ſubſcribed by 66, moſt of the Miniſtery. All which in general contain, very bitter Cenſures, and high Condemnations againſt many of your own People, who have divided from the Body of Friends, (ſo called by your ſelves) wherein you teſtify, *That thoſe ingaged in the Spirit of Separation, ought not to have any Rule or Dominion in the Church of God, whereof the Holy Spirit that was poured forth upon you,* (as you ſay) *hath made you Overſeers.* But your Fruits will make you more manifeſt than your Words. Alſo, *That all that are joined to that Spirit of Separation, who ſtand not in Unity with your Miniſtry, their Judgments ought not to be regarded amongſt Friends.* And further, *You declare your ſelves the Witneſſes and Ambaſſadors of the Unchangeable Truth, and the Elders of the Church of God, who of right (having kept your Habitations in the Truth) ought to judg of things which differ, and this your Judgment to ſtand good and valid amongſt Friends againſt all that oppoſe it.* Alſo, *that if any pretending to be of your Membership, will not admit to be tried, in caſe of Controverſy, by the Elders and Members of this your Body, but oppoſe it, (as the Judgment of Man) you then teſtify in the Name of the Lord againſt them, that he or ſhe, with all thoſe that countenance theſe Refuſers, are to be rejected, as joined in one with Infidels and Heathens.* Theſe (together with *G. F*'s Paper in vindication of Preſcriptions, dated the 4*th* Month 1678) impoſing upon the Conſciences of Men; as alſo the particular Invectives againſt *John Wilkinſon* and *John Story*, both importing the ſame Spirit of Dominion and Rule over the Conſcience, (which is the proper Heritage of God) I have both ſeen, well-weighed, and conſidered; and while I contemplate your preſent State, by comparing it with the Principles with which you were firſt inſpired, I cannot but take up that Lamentation concerning you, which the Prophet of old did concerning *Iſrael*,

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How is the Mighty fallen? How is the Gold become dim? the fine Gold how is it changed? Even the Sea-Monsters draw out the Breasts, and give suck to their young Ones, but the Daughters of my People are become cruel, like the Ostrich in the Wilderness. O let it be timely considered by you, how degenerate you are grown from that Love, Meekness, and Simplicity to which you at first pretended. Are not you the Men that have in your Doctrine exalted the Measure of God in all Men, as the only Guide and Director, in that to abide, and by it to be led, and not by any outward Prescriptions or Impositions whatsoever? And are not you the Men that now not only impose and prescribe on others, but also condemn and censure your Innocent Brethren as *Heathens* and *Infidels*, because in Conscience they cannot subject themselves under the Yoke of your Prescriptions? Are you so presumptuous, as to conclude all Knowledg and discerning in the Things of God, and all Spiritual Judgment is given into your Hands, that you usurp the Keys of the Kingdom, and will let none in, but those who stand in conformity to your carnal and literal Impositions? Is *G. F.* and the Body of his Friends, of greater Authority than *Peter*, (who was an Elder and Pillar of the Church?) whom nevertheless *Paul* withstood, because he did not walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, but endeavoured to compel the *Gentiles* (who had their Law within themselves) to live after the manner and form of the *Jews*, whose Law stood much in outward Observation from the Letter, as doth *G. F*'s Comely Order. And are *G. F.* and his Friends, so bold and daring, as to condemn the Generation of the Just, that went before you in other past Ages, under their various Dispensation, (and all those Worthies in our present Time, who cannot own your Practices, or submit to your Precepts) by concluding them none of the Body of Christ, because none of your Membership? Is the Body of Christ now shrunk and narrow'd into *G. F*'s Tribe of Members and Ministers? are these the Lips only that preserve Knowledg? are you the only Men that fear God and work Righteousness? and must we forsake the inward Testimony, to ask the Law from your Mouths? Can any thing be more prodigious and destructive to the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus than this Doctrine? or present it self with greater horror and amazement to the minds of all rational and sober Men, and all that truly fear God, that the injunction of a necessary submission to *G. F.* and his Tribe of Proselytes, under the penalty of being no otherwise esteemed than *Heathens* and *Infidels*? Do not you in these things apparently cloath your selves with the Livery and Character of him who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped, by creating a Dominion over your Brethren, and the movings of God in them, and claiming a Power to judg of

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all Differences, preſcribing Rules and Orders, and putting Yokes upon the Necks of your Diſciples, to the ſtifling of their Conſciences, wounding their Peace, and deſtroying that Liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made them free? If this be the Spirit which you at preſent ſtand in, (as your ſeveral forementioned Papers do plainly import) I dare boldly challenge all that have gone before you, from the *Pope* himſelf downward, to all Sects and Opinions extant in the World, to produce, if they can, a greater Inſtance of ſwelling Soveraignty over the Minds and Conſciences of Men, than you have erected. And certainly had you a Secular Power but framed and fitted to your Rule, Eccleſiaſtical Supremacy, the World would ſoon feel, that the Finger of your Church-Cenſures, would bear an equal weight (at leaſt) with the Loins of thoſe Perſecutors which have bin your Predeceſſors. Now (all this conſidered) can you in ſoberneſs conceive that this frame of Spirit (in that abſolute Dominion which you claim to your ſelves over all others) will render you the Healers of our Breaches, and the Reſtorers of our Paths of Peace? Can you think that this Arbitrary and Haughty Government, will invite the Nations and Languages of all Sects and Opinions, to lay hold on your Skirts, with deſire to be led by you, becauſe the Lord is with you? Or do they not rather with dread and horror behold you, while you ſo heavily impoſe upon others in ſuch Circumſtances and Indifferencies, wherein the Kingdom of God doth not conſiſt, and make thoſe Rules and Preſcriptions of equal value with Divine Inſtitutions? Witneſs the Hat, *&c.* the outward Garb impoſed upon your Proſelytes; Your Set-times when to begin, and when to end your Religious Exerciſes (notwithſtanding your pretence of the immediate guidance of the Spirit); Your manner of greeting one another, with many things of the like Nature. To all which an exact conformity is required, upon the penalty of a Cenſure from *G. F.* and his Elderſhip.

Now, dear Friends, can you (in the cool of the Day of God upon your Spirits) believe that this violent and rigid ſort of Practice, will render your Feet beautiful upon the Mountains? or will attract the Hearts of any wiſe or ingenuous People toward you? No ſurely, your experience may otherwiſe inform you, that ſince this violence (of *Eſau* againſt his Brother *Jacob*) hath appeared amongſt you the Curſe of *Babylon* hath overtaken you, (*Iſa.* 47. 9, to the end) even the loſs of Children and Widowhood, which will certainly come upon you in their perfection, as the Witneſs of God ariſeth amongſt thoſe that you have ſo heavily yok'd and burthened with your own invented Preſcriptions.

I have done with you, when I have told you, That the Diſpenſations in which God adminiſters Himſelf to the World at this day, do moſt natu-

rally call for a more ſober, moderate, tender, and loving Spirit amongſt Chriſtians, than this wherein you are exerciſed. You cannot but obſerve how the Lord of Hoſts is pleading with the World in the dreadful Manifeſtations of his *Power*, (by *Plague*, *Fire*, *Sword*, &c.) how He turns the Earth up-ſide down, and makes it reel to and fro like a Drunkard; and the Foundations of the World are out of Courſe, divided and broken, both in their Civil Policies, and Religious Practices. Fear, the Pit, and a Snare, have laid hold on the Inhabitants of the Earth, there is no Eſtabliſhment in their Paths, and the way of Peace they know not: Yea, this is the day of *Jacob*'s Troubles, and for the Diviſions of *Reuben* there are great ſearchings of Heart; God is now pleading in Judgment with the People that have bin called by his Name, ſearching *Jeruſalem* with Candles, (*Zeph.* 1. 12, &c.) and Judgment is already begun at the Houſe of God; He is about to judg the Spiritual Pride and Exaltation, the Cruelty and Oppreſſion, the Hypocriſy and Formality that hath mingled it ſelf with all the fair and beautiful Profeſſions of thoſe that have bin called *Chriſtians*. And what will you ſay (my Friends) if in *Iſrael*'s Skirts be found the Blood of the Souls of the poor Innocent? (*Jer.* 2. 34, &c.) Now if this be the proper Work of the Almighty at this day (as certainly all that are not either blinded with Carnal Intereſt, or lull'd into a formal Security, muſt needs acknowledg); Can you yet be ſo vainly confident, as to perſwade your ſelves that nothing of this Evil ſhall come near your Borders, whilſt the Arrows of God's Judgments fly ſo thick in the World, and ſtick ſo deep in the Hearts and ſides of all, both Civil and Religious Intereſts? Are you, and your Impoſing Tribe, the only Men that muſt eſcape, when the whole World is to be ſet on Fire, yea, the very Heavens of Profeſſors are to be burnt up, and nothing to be left alive in us, but what can lie down in thoſe Flames? Is there nothing, think ye, in or amongſt your People that is for Judgment? Or, is this a time for you to build (and raiſe a Name to your ſelves) when God is deſtroying? to contend for outward Rule and Dominion over others, when God is pleading his own Royal Prerogative? to ſit in judgment over the Conſciences of your Brethren, when the Judg ſtands at the Door? Or are ye ſo regardleſs of the prints and foottteps of the Almighty in his preſent Providences, that ye ſay in you Hearts, with that Evil Servant, *The Lord delays his coming?* and fall to ſmiting your fellow Servants with the Tongue and Fiſt of Wickedneſs, wounding and reproaching them with your bitter and ſevere Cenſures, thinking (with the evil Husbandmen) therewith to kill and ſlay the Heir, the Seed of God in Man, that muſt rule and reign? Surely (my Friends) the tempeſtuous Storms of Wrath and Indignation that you ſee falling upon the World,

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do earneſtly call for a more mild and ſober Spirit amongſt you than this: *Let therefore your Moderation be known to all Men; the Lord is at hand.* If you would be a Bleſſing to the World in your Generation, learn firſt to judg and condemn your ſelves: Caſt off your Judging, Cenſuring, and impoſing Spirit, and give the Witneſs of God in every one its juſt Right, its due Scope and Latitude, and uſurp not Authority over it: Take not upon you to be Lords over God's Heritage; let the Bowels of your Love and Tenderneſs be drawn out and extended towards the Meaſure of God in all Men of every Religion, in forbearance and forgiveneſs to the whole World. Follow Peace in the Spirit of Love with all Men, and Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee God. Give *Chriſt* his Prerogative in Spirituals, He muſt and will have it; Give *Cæſar* his due in Temporals, who may of undoubted right challenge it. Thus if you can commend your ſelves to God and the World, ye ſhall be the Joy of this Generation; all good Men will be drawn out in an earneſt imitation of your Purity, while the violent and wicked ſhall ſtand mute, and be ſtruck dumb at your modeſt Patience and Meekneſs; you ſhall never want either inward Peace, or outward Freedom, but ye ſhall enter iuto Peace, and reſt in your Beds, each one walking in his Uprightneſs. This (my dear Friends) is the Teſtimony, in which I long to meet you, and which will juſtly provoke the hearty embraces of

Your true Friend in Love to ſerve you,
R. R.

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